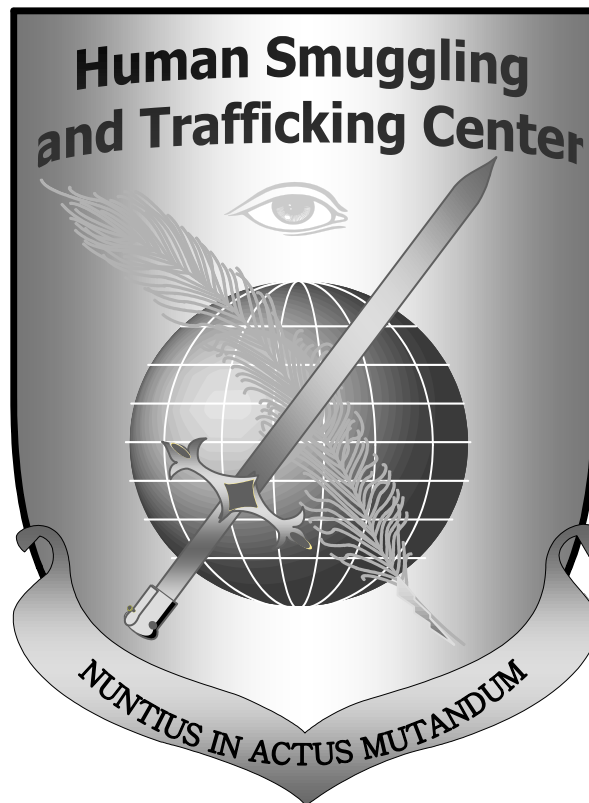


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# Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center



## HSTC Intelligence Note

**Tenancingo Bulletin #8:  
Tlaxcalan Industrial Development  
Forged a Culture of Trafficking**

**HSTC 2011010014  
January 10, 2011**

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*(CONTEXT STATEMENT: The information in this report was provided by the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) in collaboration with the participating agencies of the HSTC. The HSTC is an interagency fusion center and information clearinghouse, composed of representatives from various governmental agencies, and focused on matters of human smuggling, human trafficking, and the facilitation of terrorist travel. The HSTC provides the U.S. Government with a mechanism to achieve greater integration and overall effectiveness in its efforts to eliminate these activities. The HSTC is unique among U.S. organizations and centers in that it concentrates on illicit worldwide travel and provides guidance to U.S. Government policymakers.)*

**Scope Note:** *This is the eighth in a series of bulletins at the unclassified level based solely on open source reporting intended to inform federal, state, and local law enforcement about the Tlaxcala, Mexico-based sex trafficking network with ties to the U.S.*

### **(U) Tlaxcalan Industrial Development Forged a Culture of Trafficking**

*(U) For some 30 years, Tlaxcala has produced high numbers of traffickers targeting poor, rural, primarily indigenous women and girls. The industrial development of the state helps inform how it became a breeding ground for sex traffickers, but is just one contributing factor. We will explore additional aspects of the development of this culture in successive Intelligence Notes.*

#### *(U) The Region*

(U) The Puebla –Tlaxcala region, also known as the Malinche Volcano Region or the Atoyac Highland, is a triangle-shaped valley. Its first side is formed by the line drawn from San Martín Texmelucan, Puebla to Apizaco, Tlaxcala; its second side is the vertical line between Apizaco and Puebla City; and the third side runs from Puebla City back to San Martín Texmelucan. The region is bordered on the west by the Sierra Nevada mountain range, which separates the valley from Mexico state, and to the east by Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl mountains and Telapón and Tlálóc hills, which separate the region from the Oaxaca state.<sup>1</sup>

#### *(U) Tlaxcalans Began Travelling to Earn in Nearby Textile Factories*

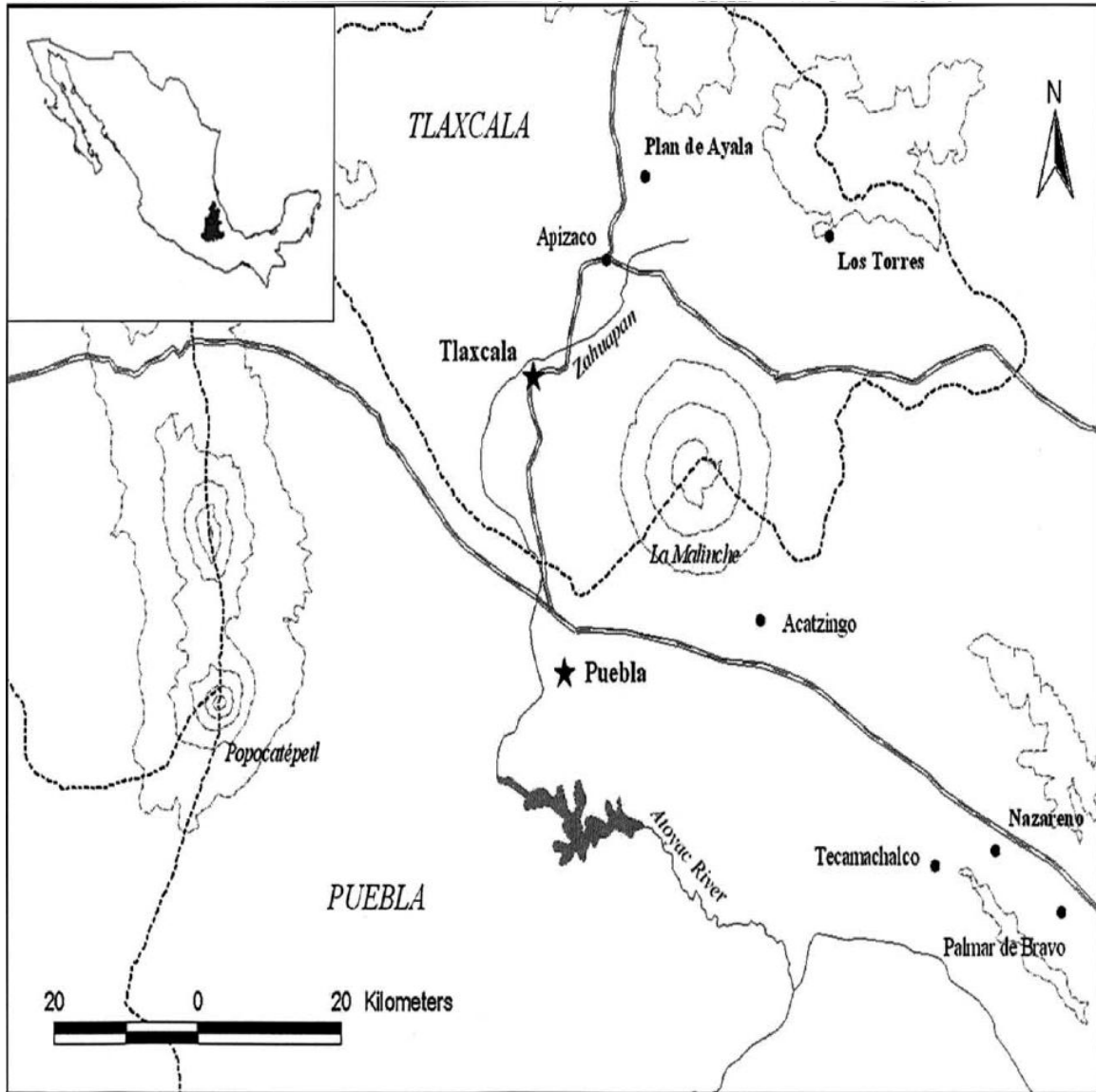
(U) In the mid-1800s the region's Atoyac rivers became crucial to the modernization of the cotton thread making factories that arose in that area. By 1868, 17 of the 27 textile factories in Mexico were in Puebla, the capital of Puebla state and just across the border from Tlaxcala. Tlaxcala became a chief exporter of laborers to Puebla, with high points of migrant workers in the 1950s and 1960s. So began the trend of Tlaxcalan men traveling among brothers, fathers, and uncles to earn their living.<sup>2</sup>

#### *(U) Factory Employment Proves Unstable*

(U) Later that century, the advent of the railway made Mexico City an industrial center, leading to temporary declines in economic opportunities for Tlaxcalans in closer Puebla city and Tlaxcala capital. Meanwhile, agrarian reform pursuant to the 1910 Revolution

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allowed some Tlaxcalans to return to their recently reacquired land. World War II prompted a similar industrial boom and bust cycle as with Revolution-time factory closures. The U.S. Bracero program of the late-1940s through mid-1960s, permitting the temporary migration of Mexicans for contract farm work in the U.S., also increased Tlaxcalans' disposition to leaving home in order to earn a living.<sup>3</sup>



*(U) Tlaxcalan Men Migrate Weekly to the Capital and Share Female Domestic*

(U) As a result of the turnover, a larger fraction of workers employed in Tlaxcala and Puebla began to travel to Mexico City for work in the technologically more advanced synthetic textile industry there. This led to a weekly migration of male members of families, as roads were too poor to permit a daily commute. The laborers rented rooms that they shared between eight to 12 men, with one woman as housekeeper.

*(U) More Women Migrate to Mexico City as Factory Workers Discover their Worth*

(U) As women began to move outside of the home and agricultural sectors in favor of service sector employment during the 1970s, they leveraged family ties to find work as domestics in Mexico City and, often with the consent of their families, belonged to the “padrotes” responsible for bringing them.<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s, big industry bosses fired and blacklisted picketers in Mexico City, increasing unemployed laborers turning to prostitution.<sup>5</sup> The 1994 Mexican peso crisis, causing the sudden devaluation of the Mexican peso, made laborers’ situation more precarious still, further augmenting the allure of “the oldest profession in the world.” Over time, the weekly migrating Tlaxcalan men transitioned from factory employment to prostitution, which they found allowed them to “live off the work of women.”

***(U) While Tlaxcala’s industrial development is by no measure the only cause of the strong sex trafficker presence, the state’s history of economic instability and continued lack of opportunity help explain why the business originated. As with the drug trafficking trade, Mexican policy makers -- particularly at the state and local level -- will need to address the economic root problems that make trafficking attractive to young Tlaxcalan men. Until costs and benefits favor licit employment over more lucrative illicit trades, Tlaxcala may be expected to remain a fertile recruitment ground for new traffickers.***

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<sup>1</sup>(U) Robichaux, David, *Espacios familiares: ámbitos de sobrevivencia y solidaridad*, “Un modelo de familia para el “México Profundo,” 1997, PUEGUNAM/DIF/CONAPO/UAM-Azcapotzalco.

<sup>2</sup>(U) Tlaxcala, textos de su historia, pp. 273.

<sup>3</sup>(U) Robichaux, David, *Espacios familiares: ámbitos de sobrevivencia y solidaridad*, “Un modelo de familia para el “México Profundo,” 1997, PUEGUNAM/DIF/CONAPO/UAM-Azcapotzalco.

<sup>4</sup>(U) Castañeda, Martha Patricia, 2007, “Ampliación de las opciones laborales y escolares de las mujeres rurales de Tlaxcala,” in David Robichaux, *Familias mexicanas en transición*, Universidad Iberoamericana, México.

<sup>5</sup>(U) Rothstein, Frances A, “Parentesco y empleo femenino en el México rural: estrategias cambiantes ante el nuevo modelo económico,” en David Robichaux, *Familias mexicanas en Transición*, Universidad Iberoamericana, México, 2007.